

## **Afghanistan's Significance for the United States (2001-16)**

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Recently the international politics is marked by major developments as military intervention, oil politics, strategic power calculations and pre-emptive wars. The American policy contours in Afghanistan consequent to 9/11 were to defeat, dismantle and disrupt Al-Qaeda and Taliban through military engagement in order to have a less violent world. The US military engagement under Operation Enduring Freedom remained of Combating Terrorism till the end of 2014 while in the first half of 2015 it transformed into Operation Freedom Sentinel under Resolute Support Mission in order to restrict the very role of NATO to Assist, Advice and Train the military personnel only. The grounds for investigation are that what are the US policy contours in Afghanistan and how much the US military engagement has worked? What are main problems in the region and reasons for problems also need to be checked. For this research mixed method design is used with descriptive statistics. The hypothesis of study is that Afghanistan is significant for the United States for not only curbing terrorism but also for relative power maximization as expounded by realist paradigm. Despite US military engagement for one and half decade, the momentum of militancy and insurgency inside Afghanistan is mounting whereby IS has also been an addition to the scene and there are various obstacles in peace talks. The viable solution for Afghanistan problem is not military but negotiation based on pluralism, constitutionalism and recognition of minorities' rights .

**Keywords:** militancy, insecurity, terrorism, negotiation, military engagement, Descriptive Statistics.

The American war in Afghanistan based on toppling Taliban and dismantling Al-Qaeda was started immediate the 9/11 incident(Gates, 2014, p.195). The incident was termed as 21<sup>st</sup> century's

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Contribution of Authors:

1. Dr. Saima Parveen has collected, analyzed and interpreted Data, contributed in methodology of the study, did Literature Review along with having Interviews with concerned ministries in order to present factual information and to get working policy options.
2. Dr. Syed Akhtar Ali Shah has contributed in thematic analysis of the paper and in improving literature.
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Pearl Harbor by the Bush (Ryan, 2015) which was determined to be handled sternly. The US goal was to degrade the military capabilities of Taliban and building Afghan Army and Local Security Forces for controlling extremists and denying them any future sanctuary in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, international intervention since 2001 was driven by two forces as firstly the US wanted to flourish its strategic power with help of military force and secondly United Nations efforts emphasized for establishing less violent world (Suhkre, 2012). The US short term policy contours in Afghanistan with Operation Enduring Freedom were that the US has identified the 'enemy (as) a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them' and emphasized that 'our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated (Bush, 2001). The US military accentuated on counter-terrorism for initial couple of years and spending resources for dismantling Taliban (Chandrasekaran, 2012).

The policy parameters of the US in Afghanistan have been stretched to various dimensions as military, political and economic engagements. These contours have been illustrated as Brig. Ghazanfar, former Director ISI, is of the view that US launched war against terrorism in order to secure peace at world level; to curb and defeat Al-Qaeda by causing death blow to its infrastructure and safe-havens in the region and especially in Pakistan (Ghazanfar, 2013). The US motive was to make Al-Qaeda suffer the most (Khan, 2016). According to Colonel Zahurul Haq, the US was to keep military engagement in order to revenge for their deadly attacks on New York and World Trade Centre in 2001 the ambit of which was later on spread to the Taliban too. The same argument has been accentuated by Mohmand. According to Brig. Javed, the US policy was to have physical presence and to operate both overt and covert. The basic policy lines remained same whereas the operation mode has been in constant state of flux.

For Brig. Mahmud Shah the contours of US policy included economic and political dimensions for having an emphasis on institutions building, state and society stability and government based on rule of law, financially stable, to exonerate the people from ruthless clutches of Taliban and war lords and replacing the prevailing set up with democratic government (Shah, 2013)

This piece of research investigates the contours of United States policy in Afghanistan of combating terrorism and militancy. What are problems in Afghanistan and reasons leading towards these problems? How much the US military engagement has succeeded in combating these problems?

### **Literature Review**

Lyne (2006) holds the view that since 1945, the US grand strategy was mainly to contain rival 'peer competitor' who can be capable to control Eurasian hub of economic and military powers.

Buckley (2008) has described that the US strategy was operated during the Cold War against the Soviet Union and China after 1945. The US interests comprised security, economy and has established an international order accordingly after the World War-II in order to promote mutual security and open market. These arrangements have been done mainly due to the apprehension about Chinese possible threats to the US interests in free market and security. The US has great powers as Japan, India, Australia and South Korea as well as emerging powers like Vietnam and Indonesia on its side for their autonomy and to oppose Chinese attempts on security.

Brzezinski (2008) illustrates the theory that an access to the Central Asia is vital as being benchmark for Eurasian ascendancy and global hegemony will be based on regulation of Eurasian resources. In this connection the US has invaded Afghanistan in order to have control over Eurasian resources, whereby, the regional powers also supported the US move against Taliban. However the prolong US-led coalition forces presence with no clear strategy was opposed later on.

Abbas (2012) has accentuated the point put forwarded by Brezinski that the US policy contours were to counter regional powers having leverage in CARs and to thwart the Russia, China and Iran from completion of developmental projects. However, since invasion of the Afghanistan by the US there has been no any headway in fulfillment of these objectives. Whereas, the regional states have been focused on achievement of their mutual interests by developing structuralization in the region.

### **The United States Policy Contours in Afghanistan**

The US policy lines in Afghanistan consisted of military engagement for balancing the Afghan Taliban threat by making Afghanistan National Security Forces trained and armed, nation-building by strengthening the capacity of Kabul and assistance in economic reconstruction. Global support for economic and technological development in Afghanistan is needed by the US in order to ensure stability in Afghanistan besides the border disputes settlement and to counter the militancy spill over (Rizvi, 2013).

For the first seven years of the Afghan war, George W. Bush followed his one-dimensional neo-con policy in Afghanistan. This policy comprised two parameters as to avenge Taliban for having sides with Al-Qaeda and refusal to give Osama Bin Laden to the US, and secondly to end their regime for this (Samad, 2011). There was no any consensus for the US invading Afghanistan. The coalition strategy was to end the Taliban regime by advance technology whereas the remnants of dirty work on ground will be done by Northern Alliance. The help of anti-Taliban elements was taken in this perspective.

Consequently, there happened four developments as the Northern Alliances being effective in the Tajik-Uzbek-Hazarajat areas proved incapable in Pashtun majority areas encompassed Taliban. Resultantly, the Northern Alliance focused on getting portfolios in new set up and in security services while fighting left for the U.S/NATO forces. Secondly, the new establishment in Afghanistan as per Bonn Accord gave little stake to the Pashtun majority which narrow down its support base in Afghanistan. Thirdly, Taliban having strong bases in Pashtun majority areas gained new spirit, regrouped and started resistance against the coalition forces in these areas. Fourthly, although having legitimacy by the UN but this intervention was deemed as pure foreign occupation by majority of the Afghans.

According to Barack Obama the war of Afghanistan was the 'good war' and war of necessity for dismantling al-Qaeda and discouraging Afghanistan from sheltering militants (Haass, 2009). There were two main objectives behind invading Afghanistan, firstly to dismantle Al-Qaeda and secondly, nation building however after decade of this military engagement, the prevailing security situation is worse. Albeit Al-Qaeda has been trembled by killing of its central command Osama Bin Laden but this organization is firm and has strengthened its roots. NATO has not been able to curb violence and insurgency and the fact is that majority of Afghan provinces are under ruthless flames of terror (Lepri, 2012). Basically, Afghanistan is a graveyard of several empires not only due to weak strategies of

those superpowers but also by intricate nature of Afghanistan, where the people are more stubborn and hateful to outsiders and it is quite impossible to get their favor and essence of how to rule them. ISAF failure is also due to the lack of unanimous persistent decision on which international community could concede.

The US military engagement in Afghanistan seems pointless as reflected from the remark of the US war's chief salesman, ex-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, that the US has no ambitions on land whose people and territory has already defeated and weaken two empires in recent past. The US Air Force Colonel expressed his frustration that Afghanistan military engagement has caused no apparent good omen and now there should be just proper strategy to come out of this quagmire.

The US engagement in Afghanistan has yielded nothing as the menace of Taliban is there in the region. According to Brig. Mahmood Shah the US succeeded in achieving nothing remarkable except eliminating Osama Bin Laden(Shah, 2013).

### **The United States Military Engagement in Afghanistan**

In 2002 operation code named ANACONDA was launched by coalition troops of approximately 10,000 to handle the Taliban with iron hands. After the installation of new government, international troops numbering 4500 including International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) were sent to Afghanistan in 2003. There were intense military operations to curb the stronghold of Taliban and the United States even separately launched operations at Bagram Airbase and Kandahar with 18,000 men to eliminate the Taliban high command(Kerry, 2009).A major operation was launched jointly by the US and Afghan troops in August 2005 in Dai Chopan which had inflicted torments to the militants. In start of 2005, Helmand was under firm grip of Taliban who took control of northern districts of province and were threatening for stretching control southward towards Lashkar Gah (Chandrasekaran, 2012).In January and May of 2008, the US reinvigorated troop's level in Afghanistan to 48,000 American service personnel with active operations (Chandrasekaran, 2012).It comprised British troops of nearly 8,000 personnel. Meanwhile, insurgency had escalated with horrendous events in one of which prison Sarposa was attacked in order to release fellow captives numbering 1200 by Taliban (Chandrasekaran, 2012).Consequently, ISAF launched major Operation Code named Eagle Summit in Helmand province where heavy casualties were faced by ISAF (Chandrasekaran, 2012).There was uprising of local militants in the same year due to their ire against foreign occupation. They used Improvised Explosive Device (IED) as an effective weapon in this regard and instigated suicide bombing. In Afghanistan the fighting was transformed into extreme insurgency in 2008. The United Nations used security maps for aid workers having green marked areas as safe, yellow for areas ridden with security problem and red for dangerous areas whereby in 2008 major areas were marked red.

Obama in his presidential address of 2009 stated that in comparison of 160,000 troops deployed in Iraq, these 32,000 US troops in Afghanistan are inadequate to accomplish the policy end, and therefore additional 30,000 troops would be deployed with specific timeline (Obama's Address, 2009, p.2).He ordered transition of security to Afghan integral forces and withdrawal of the US from 2011. According to Pentagon and White House officials, COIN would turn around Afghan war (Chandrasekaran, 2012).The strategy of COIN could succeed only if accompanied by nation-building, good governance and to guarantee social services in order to take the people away from foes (Chandrasekaran, 2012).The need is to contemplate whether the US military engagement has worked.

### **Raising and Training of Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces, Composition and Capabilities.**

General Stanley McChrystal's introduced security transition where this strategy was to build ANSF capability through 'embedded partnering' that is to fuse two military forces in a single team, to utilize ISAF's combat power and technology and to render situational alertness to ANSF so that they can tackle the sensitive security in more efficient way.

The ANSF, particularly the ANA and the Afghan National Police (ANP), are battle-tested and have military experience. In Afghanistan, most areas have been handed to ANSF to carry out security provision. The Afghan National Army has operated independently for many security operations (Rizvi, 2013). ISAF were only called when some grave security situation arose. Nearly 85 percent of operations are conducted by ANSF recently. ISAF has been replaced by Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in January 2015 which is to advise and remain at the back of ANSF (Hanlon & Flourney, 2013).

The onus connected with both Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police is that they are unable to subdue perpetrators which has resulted in insecurity about lives of common people. Like Afghanistan's political set up Afghan national army is also corruption ridden. Afghan National Police is infamous for both sleaze and ethnic strife. There is no counter crime capability in ANP and only nominal training towards this capacity build up has been taken.

### **Prevailing Security Situation in Afghanistan**

In Afghanistan there is trembled security where Taliban cannot be sidelined now. Gradually security threat will be escalated. The Taliban are engrossed in ruthless activities at the local level which have endangered lives of locals, although, they are far away to reign people's minds. Moreover, there have been uprising against Taliban in places such as Zhary and Panjwa'i, in western Kandahar province, and Andar in Ghazni province between Kabul and Kandahar (Allen, Flourney & Hanlon, 2013).

In Afghanistan there are three main causes for resurgence as firstly the Taliban are recently at ease due to the exit of most of the foreign forces from Afghanistan. These insurgent groups are emboldened now due to distraction of international community from Afghanistan to Syria, Ukraine and Iraq. Taliban have control not only over military bases, security checkpoints, district centers but also taken weapons, police vehicles and Humvees to be used against Afghan government. Secondly the non-state actors have flocked to Afghanistan from Pakistan's tribal areas as a consequence of Zarb-e-Azb operation which has made Taliban domain very bully. Thirdly, although Afghan security forces have fought well but they are devoid of some required equipment as reconnaissance and air power. Moreover, Taliban have taken advantage of preventing political polarization. Taliban are intolerant towards other groups who challenge their legitimacy as they remain fighting in past also against Hizb-i-Islami Gulbadin (HIG).

The Taliban have control over major areas of Afghanistan than any time since 2001. In January 2016 according to the long war journal report the Taliban have grip over 40 districts in Afghanistan and contest in more 39 whereby in Helmand the control stretched over five districts and contest in six others. In Afghanistan, Taliban and Haqqani Network are gaining strength since 2014 hence the US military be given authority to unilaterally attack on these militants. The apprehension regarding militant group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is increasing due to flourishing Jihadi ideology and struggle for Khilafat and its claim for political and theological authority over the entire

Muslim of world. ISIS ingress in Afghanistan is enhanced whereby it is active in Faryab, Helmand and Nangarhar. ISIS announced formation of Khurasan Shura in January 2015 in order to observe its activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The presence of ISIS in Afghanistan has been acknowledged by the US Commander General John Campbell by declaring it as operational rather than nascent.

Over the past 15 years hundreds of thousands of deaths have been happened where the US has deployed 130,000 troops and expenditure of \$ 686 billion(Resolute Support Mission, 2017).In spite of it 2015 has been the bloodiest year with enhanced insurgency. In Annual Report for 2015 the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has recorded 21,323 deaths and 37,413 injuries in the time duration of 2009 to 2015(UNAMA, 2015).The Taliban are having firm hold over Kunduz, Faryab and Badakhshah with enhanced insurgency throughout 2014-15(Dostyar, 2017).

According to UN secretary General report in December, Afghanistan's security has been worst in time line of January to October 2016 with increase armed clashes between Taliban and Afghan security forces. Whereas the recorded armed clashes in 2015 were 22 %.(UN Report, 2016, p.4) While Taliban are challenging government control in main districts and cutting off strategically crucial supply routes and highways(UN Report, 2016, p.4).As per UN report security incidents happened between 16<sup>th</sup> August till 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were 6,261, 9 % increase since 2015(UN Report, 2016, pp.4-5).Most of security incidents (66 %) occurred in southern, eastern and southeastern region.(UN Report, 2016, p.5) By end of 2016 the ANDSF remained engaged in fighting insurgents in Uruzgan, Helmand, Laghman, Kandahar, Wardak, Faryab and Zabul provinces(Tolo News, 2016).

The US defense officials have emphasized for foreign forces presence and that the US must not abandon Afghanistan. However, according to diplomats it is not clear how a limited US presence in Afghanistan can help stabilize the situation, when this goal has remained elusive for more than a decade with the presence of 130,000 American troops?

### **Peace Talks with Taliban: Way Forward to Resolution of Afghanistan Conflict**

Neither the Afghan government nor the Taliban can win militarily. The strategic reality is that there is a stalemate which creates a compelling logic for peace talks. Taliban have splinter groups over peace talks. As every war has a diplomacy based end hence the same has been concluded by the US for amicable settlement of Afghanistan's turmoil. American expenditure in Afghanistan is roughly \$ 1 million per year which is managed with tax payers' money and capable to yield 60, 000 jobs in the USA (Wildman, 2010).Hence the American citizen are pressurizing policy makers for the earliest withdrawal due to economic reason. The militant groups as Hikmatyar, Haqqani and Taliban are nightmarish to the US security. Furthermore, the eminent defeat of its military is compelling the US for speedy withdrawal.

The tussle between Kabul government and Taliban will remain till the success of peace process and main parties in this process are the US, the Afghan government, the Taliban and Pakistan. There can be no headway without taking the process at exigency. Then first round of peace talk between Taliban and Afghan government was initiated in Murree in Pakistan on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2015(Mashal, 2015) but were jeopardized by the death news of Taliban leader Mullah Omar that he is dead for many years. The second headway in this regard came in shape of Pakistan-US-China-Afghanistan, Quadrilateral Coordination Group was formed for smoothening ground for the same

very sake. However this process was also ended by killing of Taliban leader Mullah Mansoor in drone strike in Balochistan.

In this scenario what is required for the Afghan government is to improve its communication with people for weakening the insurgency and to keep a people-centric approach on priority (Cortright, 2011, p.42). The Turkmen, Uzbek and Hazar as with Tajik and Pashtun can best serve as binding force of people centric strategy and for the credibility of the government. The government of Afghanistan can curb the insurgency only by winning the people of Afghanistan through providing better life with all facilities.

Afghanistan people and all leaders in country must understand that military option is not solution to Afghan war. Taliban and other insurgent groups need understanding that they cannot win the government through military solution. Afghanistan should consistently follow peace talk for solving Afghan problem through negotiation.

The recent major development of 2018-19 is of peace talks by the US direct with Afghan Taliban whereby Taliban have forwarded some conditions as withdrawal of foreign forces and Taliban detainees to be released. President Ashraf Ghani endeavored for negotiation with Taliban for the sake of which he paid official visits to Pakistan, China and Saudi Arabia in order to garner the required support. Consequently China has offered its support for peace talks and has hosted Taliban delegates in Beijing. The same encouragement was provided by Pakistan also. However, Taliban have refused talking with the Kabul government.

US has appointed special Envoy Afghan ethnic-Zalmi Khalilzad for peace talks with the Afghan Taliban having two points agenda of firstly, Issue of foreign Troops Withdrawal (Trump has announced half of US forces withdrawal) and secondly, Taliban commitment not to allow extremist to find safe haven in territory under their control (hold 60 pc of the country) whereas Taliban agreed not let Afghan territory used by militants.

However the obstacles are also there as time frame for withdrawal of foreign forces need to be addressed and Ghani's government credibility is shaken both internally and externally, who feel himself sidelined in the scenario.

Hence while contemplating the obstacles and challenges, the required is an agreement on the composition and mandate of an interim government. Interim government must accommodate Taliban and push forward the peace process based on ceasefire and intra-Afghan dialogue. Moreover, there is need of guarantee of regional countries for no covert or overt support of any Afghan group and the most necessary is to ensure Afghanistan's sovereignty.

### **The Under Lying Policy Contours in Afghanistan**

The US engagement in Afghanistan is not only to defeat, disrupt and dismantle Al-Qaeda and Taliban but it encompassed under lying policy contours. As illustrated the very contours by Pakistani diplomats and defence officials as; firstly, to keep an eye on Pakistan nuclear technology and weapons, secondly, to counter China, and thirdly having check over Central Asian Republics. The same argument has been accentuated by Kamal, a former diplomat that US has keen interest in Pakistan nuclear assets and to contain China. (Kamal, 2016) The US have physical presence mainly for having an access to CARs. It aims to counter the Chinese leverage in the region by developing India in

Afghanistan (Haq, 2013). Furthermore, the US access to the CARs is intended for exploiting the gas and oil resources of the Caspian Sea, to contain Iran, and checking Pakistan's nuclear proliferation. (Mohmand, 2013) The US intends to engage regional countries by utilizing their services as availing logistic support of Pakistan and bases (Lodhi, 2013).

For Azam Khan, the US policy inside Afghanistan was focused on oil and gas wealth of CARs. The US invaded Afghanistan mainly keeping the enhanced leverage of China in the region and especially in CARs. The pivot to Asia policy is also manifestation of this intention because the security paradigm has been shifted in East Asia whereas the US is yet a hegemon but apprehensive of assertive economy and military of China (Khan, 2013).

By contemplating these contours of the US engagement in Afghanistan, it is clear that underlying policy options were catered for access to oil and gas rich region. Recently, global players have their national interests and then foreign policy revolve around energy security and strategic economic interests. Their focus remains on how to access strategic minerals and energy resources. The United States interests in Afghanistan are linked to the same very parameters as to secure trade, energy access and dominance from Central Asia to India and allow Indian access to the Central Asian energy market. It focuses to prevent the emergence of an Islamic super state connecting between Pakistan and Central Asia (Hanif, 2016).

When contemplated the US interests in CARs in particular then these are to secure trade and Energy resources (abundant natural resources, minerals, oil and gas reserves, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are having 20 % uranium ore, Kyrgyzstan is having gold mine and hydroelectricity, Tajikistan large export of Aluminium). Furthermore, the US wants dominance to India in CARs and strengthening regional and Regional autonomy by preventing dominance of Beijing and Moscow. The most important perspective is to control terrorism and Islamic extremism.

The US interests in Afghanistan can better be illustrated with the help of theoretical framework of offensive realism which is the sub-division of neo-realism or structural realism presented by John J. Mearsheimer in his book of 'tragedy of great power politics', according to this theory the world structure is anarchic rather than hierarchic and the states are endlessly striving for power maximization in relative gain perspective. The theory taken into account both past and future for having an overhaul. For becoming global hegemon which seems nearly futile the struggle for power maximization continue. This they based on mainly three tenants as; firstly, having maximum stake in world power, secondly, focused on becoming global hegemon and thirdly, becoming part of perpetual competition for power as the ambition of global hegemon will be unending.

In this connection, the states for maximization of power will ready to offense, war, turmoil, blood shedding and civilian casualties, which the US has been in practice recently (Mearsheimer, 2001). The regional hegemon keep an eye on regional aspiring hegemon whereas through buck passing strategy the local powers observe the aspiring powers. If the need arise to curb and contain the peer competitors then the regional hegemon militarily invade the region. There seems no end to this struggle for power.

This research article has described the US engagement in Afghanistan through the theoretical framework of offensive realism. Whereby the US is having military, political and economic engagements in Afghanistan for having hegemony in South Asia, Central Asia and East Asia.

The US engagement in Afghanistan was to defeat, disrupt and dismantle Al-Qaeda and Taliban, nation building in Afghanistan and to bring stability in Afghanistan but till date there seems no peace and stability in Afghanistan rather at the moment majority of the areas have been in hold of Taliban whereas they are from position of strength. The offensive mode is still continued and the peace and negotiations are having multiple obstacles (Mohmand, Sherpao, Ghazanfar & Munir, 2013).The underlying policy contours will be served because in case of peace talks succeeded then also the US will have some presence and will monitor the regional states with main focus on China and Russia as recently the Belt Road Initiative is alarming for the US (Ghazanfar, 2013).

**Hypotheses of Study**

Afghanistan is significant for the United States for not only curbing terrorism but also for power play.

**Method**

This research has been conducted by mixed method approach to answers the research questions by sequential mixed method design with three major phases namely, an initial data gathering stage, a questionnaire survey, and a qualitative data gathering phase. The primary focus of the quantitative data was to get an insight into the recent statistics of Afghanistan on military and non-military policy options and engagements whereas qualitative data provides details of these engagements. The data is collected through the initial data gathering stage, the survey and qualitative data gathering phase. The sample area comprised Pakistan Foreign office, Defence Ministry, ISI, Various public sector universities (Behria University Islamabad, COMSATS Islamabad, Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi, National Defence University Islamabad, University of Peshawar, Indian Think Tank, Thailand Senior Journalist, Director of UK Statecraft).

**Results and Discussion**

Primary data of research was analyzed by using statistical package of 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Relationship between variables is given through graphs. This research investigated about safety of Afghan-Pak region that whether it is safe or not? All respondents (23) are of opinion that Afghan-Pak region is not safe as shown in Table 1, Graph 1;

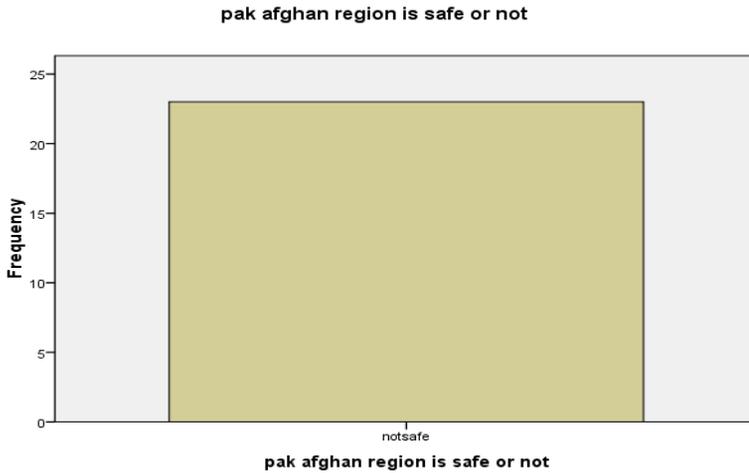
**Table 1**

*Afghan-Pak region is safe or not*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Notsafe	23	100.0	100.0	100.0

All of the key respondents (23) are of the opinion that Pak Afghan region is not safe.

Graph 1

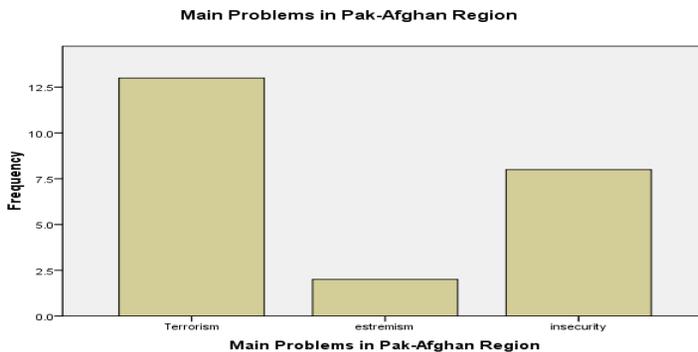


Then the question investigated was that Afghan-Pak region is not safe due to which problems? In this regard 13 respondents (56 %) replied with terrorism as main problem, 8 respondents (34.8 %) termed Insecurity as main issue while for 2 respondents (8.7 %) extremism was main problem as shown in Table 2, Graph 2, Table 3.

**Table 2**  
*Main Problems in Pak-Afghan Region*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Terrorism	13	7.7	5.3
Extremism	2	7.7	-5.7
Insecurity	8	7.7	.3
Total	23		

Here 13 respondents have termed Terrorism as main problem, according to 8 respondents Insecurity is main problem while for 2 respondents Extremism is main problem in Afghan-Pak region.



**Table 3**

*Main Problems in Pak-Afghan Region*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Terrorism	13	56.5	56.5	56.5
	Extremism	2	8.7	8.7	65.2
	Insecurity	8	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	23	100.0	100.0	

56.5 % termed terrorism as main problem in Pak-Afghan region while 34.8 % considered insecurity as main issue and 8.7 % are of opinion that Extremism is main problem.

The connected question investigated was that what are reasons for these problems? In this case 13 respondents (56.5 %) termed militancy as main reason for this problem, for 4 respondents (17.4 %) Al-Qaeda is main reason for this problem while for 2 respondents (8.7 %) Afghan war is main reason for the problem and another 2 respondents (8.7 %) Taliban is main reason for the problems in Afghan-Pak region as shown in Table 4, Graph 3

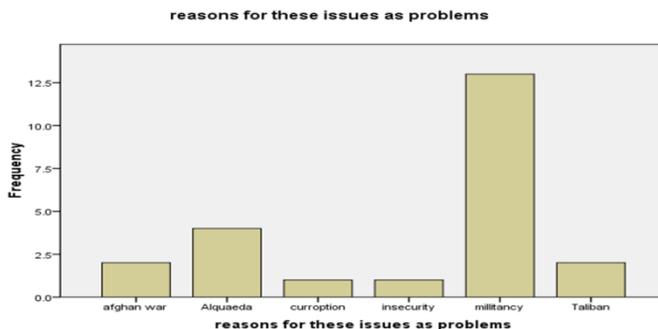
**Table 4**

*Reasons for these issues as problems*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	afghan war	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
	Alqaeda	4	17.4	17.4	26.1
	curruption	1	4.3	4.3	30.4
	insecurity	1	4.3	4.3	34.8
	millitancy	13	56.5	56.5	91.3
	Taliban	2	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Militancy was considered the main cause of the problems in this region, by majority of the respondents i.e. 13 (56.6%). Al-Qaeda stands second with 4 respondents (17.4%), Taliban and Afghan War third with 2 (8.7%) each and Corruption and insecurity is considered as 4<sup>th</sup> by 1 (4.3%) each.

**Graph 3**



Hence the results showed that Afghan-Pakistan region is not safe due to main problems of terrorism, insecurity and extremism while reasons responsible for these problems are militancy, al-Qaeda, Taliban and Afghan war. Hence the hypothesis of research is workable as militancy inside Afghanistan is internal. The way forward for settlement reasons of problem is negotiation based on pluralism, constitutionalism.

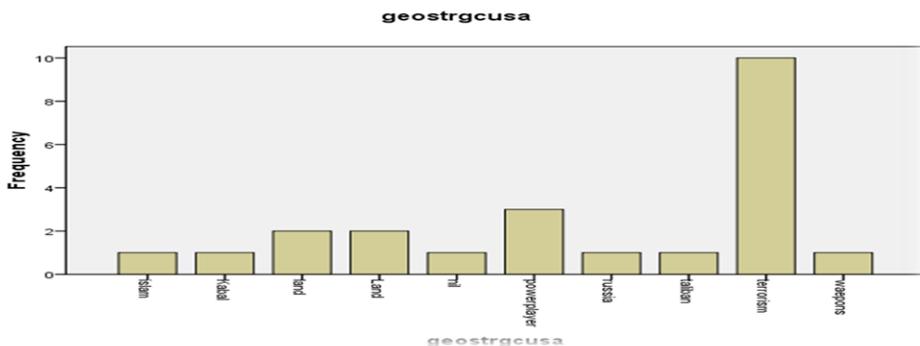
Now the question that Afghanistan is significant for the US was investigated where 10 key respondents (43.5 %) termed that the US invaded Afghanistan in order to counter Terrorism. Whereas according to 3 key respondents (13 %) the US main interest in Afghanistan is power play as shown in Table 5, Graph 4

**Table 5**

Geostrategic USA		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Islam	1	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Kabal	1	4.3	4.3	8.7
	Land	2	8.7	8.7	17.4
	Land	2	8.7	8.7	26.1
	Nil	1	4.3	4.3	30.4
	powerplayer	3	13.0	13.0	43.5
	Russia	1	4.3	4.3	47.8
	Taliban	1	4.3	4.3	52.2
	Terrorism	10	43.5	43.5	95.7
	Weapons	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	23	100.0	100.0	

13 key respondents (43.5 %) are of view that the US main interest in Afghanistan is to counter Terrorism while 3 respondents (13 %) have connected it with power play.

**Graph 4**



**Conclusion**

The US invaded Afghanistan in order to defeat, disrupt and dismantle Al-Qaeda and later on Taliban. The region was contemplated as unsafe due to presence of Al-Qaeda and Taliban. Hence the US engagement in Afghanistan stretched to political, economic and military engagement in order to fulfill its policy contours. The matter of fact is that the US military engagement has not resolved the

Afghanistan problem in more than one and half decade hence the only way forward is dialogue process based on pluralism, constitutionalism and recognition of rights of minorities. The Afghan government and International Community have used military strategy for resolution of Afghanistan conflict and having peace and stability. The emphasized started on negotiation for settlement between Taliban and government forces. The building of the Afghan National Army to fight the Taliban became extremely difficult. That difficulty persists to this day. Accumulatively, the three challenges of reconstruction, reconciliation and restoration of peace and stability could not be addressed timely. These challenges remain to haunt Afghanistan with no clear signs of solution.

Besides political instability and polarization in Afghan society there are socio-economic challenges including country's dependence on foreign aid, illegal parallel economies, drug trafficking, gender inequality, poverty, illiteracy, radicalization of society are needed to be addressed. Stable Afghanistan will facilitate regional economic integration. All factions in Afghanistan must be integrated and only the people centric approach by Afghan government can curb insurgency and militancy by ensuring common citizenry because alienation from main stream produce nothing developmental and progressive but just militancy and insurgency.

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